



Eddie A. Perez
Mayor

MAYOR AND COUNCIL LEADERSHIP STRONGLY OPPOSE LIBRARY BOARD PLAN TO CLOSE NEIGHBORHOOD BRANCHES

---NEWS AND COMMUNITY STATEMENT---

(June 27, 2008)--- In a letter sent to the Chair of the Hartford Library Board of Trustees, Mayor Eddie A. Perez, City Council President Calixto Torres, Majority Leader rJo Winch, and Assistant Majority Leader Jim Boucher strongly oppose the Library Board's plan to close multiple neighborhood branch libraries.

The letter states, "The final 2008-09 budget approved by the City Council provides \$8.2 million in funding to the Library, and it is our assessment that the Library Board has a variety of options to pursue and resources to draw upon before it takes the drastic step of closing library branches."

Those options include, but are not limited to:

1. Emergency allocation of some of the funds from the Library Board's \$14 million unrestricted endowment;
2. Consideration of additional reduction of library hours staggered throughout the system;
3. Consideration of reductions to other non-core library programming

The Mayor and Council leadership acknowledge the difficult decisions that the Library Board has had to consider. The letter states the willingness to provide city budget staff members to help carefully analyze the financial impact of potential options.

The Mayor and Council recently approved a city budget that factored in budget revenue shortfalls and a worsening economy that necessitated approving a "less than maintenance budget."

To that, the letter says, "At the same time, it is our contention that the Hartford Library Board of Directors has ample options to enable all branch libraries to remain open, and the city remains supportive of working with the Library Board of Directors to review and implement such options."